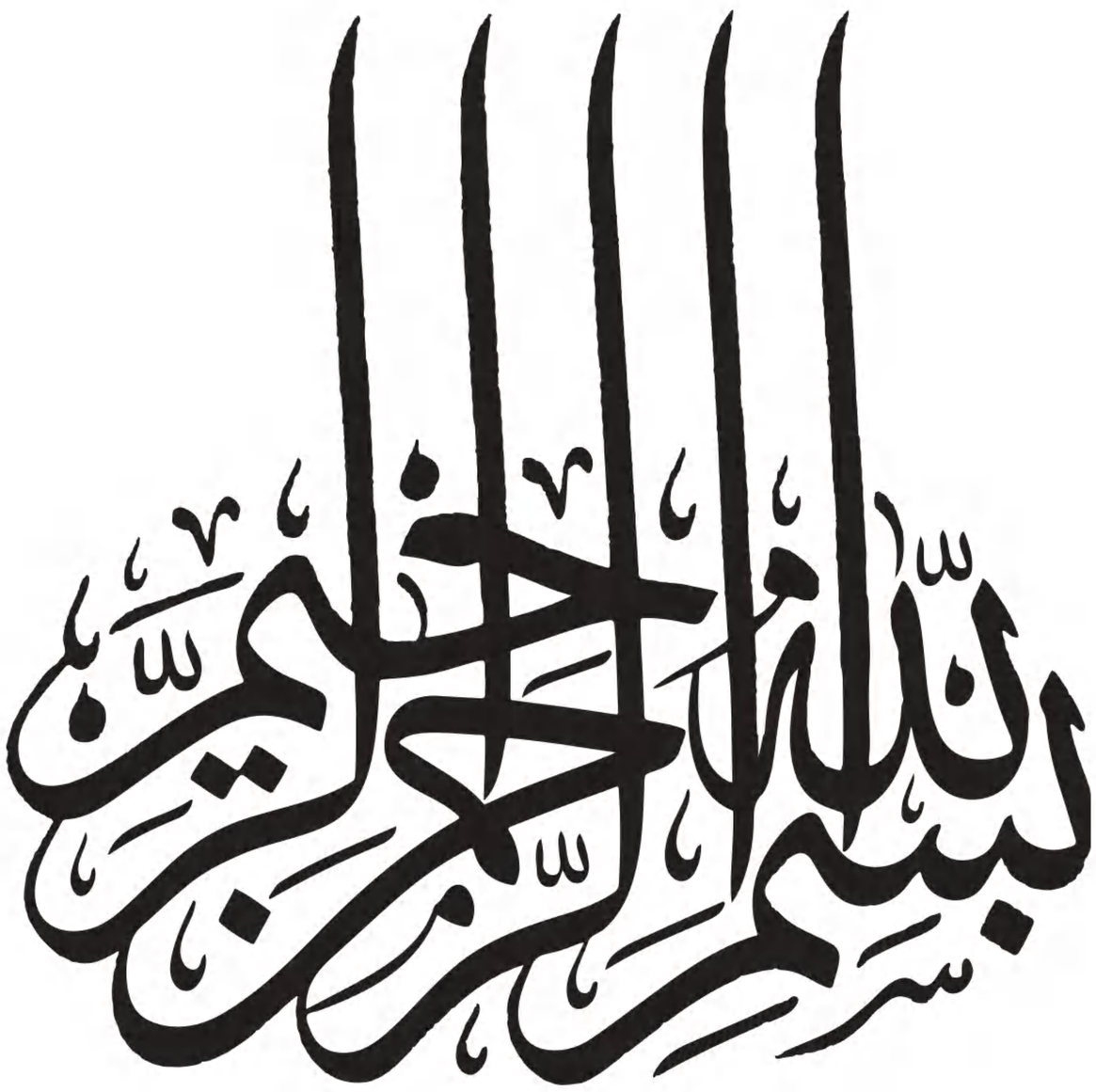
MOTHER OF THE BOOK

The Great Benefits, Rewards and Virtues of Surah Al-Fatiha

SYED NIAZ

part I, II



In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَٰكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ ٱلْمَثَانِى وَٱلْقُرْءَانَ ٱلْعَظِيمَ ﴿٨٧﴾

And indeed, We have bestowed upon you seven of
Al-Mathani (the seven repeatedly recited Verses),
(i.e. Surat Al-Fatiha) and the Grand Quran.

al-Qur'an 15:87

PREFACE

All praise and thanks belong to Allah alone, the One, the Almighty, and All-Merciful. Blessings and peace be upon Prophet Muhammad, the last of His Messengers and Prophets, and upon his family, his Companions, and all those who follow in his footsteps until the end of time.

We recite Surah Al Fatihah over 17 times a day, but how often do we stop and ponder over the greatness of this Chapter. It is quite disheartening that even though many Muslims today recite Surah Fatihah regularly, its application in their daily lives is almost non-existent. It all comes down to the fact that the Qur'an needs to be read with translation and explanation so that the context o f each verse becomes clear as well as the different ways it applies to one's daily routine.Let us take the opportunity to take a deep dive in exploring the virtues of Surah al-Fatiha.

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيمِ • بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ •

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِينَ ۝

’[1]al ḥamdu lillāhi rabbi l-‘ālamīn(a)

اَلرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝

’[2]ar raḥmāni r-raḥīm(i)

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۝ ص

[3] Maliki yawmi d-dīn(i)

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ۝ ص

’[4]iyyāka na‘budu wa’iyyāka nasta‘īn(u)

اَهْدِنَا الصِّرٰطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝

’[5]ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm(a)

صِرٰطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۝

[6]Ṣirāṭa l-lazīna ’an‘amta ‘alayhim

غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّآلِّينَ ۝ ص

[7]Ghayril maghḍūbi ‘alayhim walā ḍ-ḍāllīn(a)

Qur’an 1 : 1-7 | Surah Fatiha

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Reciting the Tasmiyah (i.e., the phrase “Bismillaah ir-Rahmaan ir-Raheem (in the name of Allaah, the most Gracious, the Most Merciful)” is Sunnah of The Messenger of Allah ﷺ .

Anas ibn Malik رضي الله عنه was asked, "How was the recitation (of the Qur'an) of the Prophet ﷺ He replied, "It was characterized by the prolongation of certain sounds." He then recited: In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful prolongi -ng the pronunciation of 'In the Name of Allah, 'the most Benefi -cent,' and 'the Most Merciful[1].

Also It was narrated from Aban bin `Uthman رحمة الله عليه that his father said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: `Whoever says in the Name of Allah, with whose name nothing on earth or in heaven can cause harm, and He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing, nothing will harm him[2].

Uthman رضي الله عنه said that he heard the Prophet, ﷺ say, "A person will not be harmed by anything if he says every morning and evening 33 times, 'In the Name of Allah by whose Name nothing in the earth or the heaven is harmed. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing[3].

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[1] Sahih al-Bukhari 5046
[2] Musnad Ahmad 446
[3] Al-Adab Al-Mufrad 660

As we have covered the virtues of reciting Bimillah before any task. Let us explore the benefits, rewards and virtues of Surah Al-Fātihah.

A Sūrah is the name of a unit of the Qur'ān. The nearest English word is 'chapter', but since sūrah' is used in Arabic to denote only units of the Qur'ān, then the name Surah has been retained in English. The Holy Qur'ān has 114 sūrahs of varying length.

Al-Fātihah is a Makki Sūrah(which means it was revealed while the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was in Makkah.) Most narrators recorded that al-Fātihah was the first complete Surah revealed to Muhammad ﷺ[4]

Al-Fātihah (The Opening or The Opener. George Sale translates simply as The Preface, or Introduction) is the first chapter (sūrah) of the Quran.
Its seven verses (āyāt) are a prayer for the guidance, lordship, and mercy of God.[5]

Reciting al-Faatihah is one of the essential parts of the prayer, and is to be recited in each rak'ah both by the imaam and by those who are being led by him. As Narrated 'Ubada bin As-Samit Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Whoever does not recite Al-Fatiha in his prayer, his prayer is invalid."[6]

There is a differences of opnion amongst the Scholars in reciting Surah Fatihah behind the Imam in the prayers.

[4,5] Tafhim Al Quran by Abul Ala
[6] Sahih al-Bukhari 756

The name al-Fātihah ("the Opener") is due to the subject-matter of the surah. Fātihah is that which opens a subject or a book or any other thing. In other words, a sort of preface or essence of the whole book.

The word الفاتحة came from the root word فتح which means to open, explain, disclose, keys of treasure etc. That means surah Al-Fatiha is the summary of the whole Quran. That is why it is generally recited with another Ayat or surah during prayers. That is, surah Al-Fatiha is paired with the rest of the whole Quran.

It is also called Umm Al-Kitab ("the Mother of the Book") and Umm Al-Quran ("the Mother of the Quran").
Narrated Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Al-Hamdulillah is Umm Al-Qur'an and Umm Al-Kitab and the seven oft-repeated.[7]"

It was also said that it is called Umm Al-Kitab, because it conta -ins the meanings of the ent ire Qur'an. Ibn Jarir رحمة الله عليه said, "The Arabs call every comprehensive matter that contains several specific areas an Umm. For instance, they call the skin that surrounds the brain, Umm Ar-Ra's. They also call the flag that gathers the ranks of the army an Umm. " He also said, "Makkah was called Umm Al-Qura, (the Mother of the Villages) because it is the grandest and the leader of all villages. It was also said that the earth was made starting from Makkah."

[7] Jami` at-Tirmidhi | Book 47, Hadith 3415

It was narrated that Abdullah Ibn Ab -bas ﷺ said: "When Jibril عليه السلام was with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), he heard a sound from above like a door opening. Jibril عليه السلام peace be upon him, looked up toward the sky and said: 'This is a gate in Heaven that has been opened, but it was never opened before." He said: "An Angel came down from it and came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: 'Receive the glad tidings of two lights that have been given to you and were never given to any prophet before you: The Opening of the Book (Al-Fatihah) and the last verses of Surat Al-Baqarah. You will never recite a single letter of them but you will be granted it.[8]'" Allah ﷻ himself speaks about the virtue of Surah al-Fatiha in Holy Quran “And indeed, We have bestowed upon you seven of Al-Mathani (the seven repeatedly recited Verses), (i.e. Surat Al-Fat -iha) and the Grand Quran.[9]” In Tafsir of the above verse there is a Hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari. Narrated Abu Sa`id Al-Mualla ﷺ While I was praying, the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by and called me, but I did not go to him till I had finished my prayer. When I went to him, he said, "What prevented you from coming?" I said, "I was praying." He said, "Didn't Allah say" "O you who believes Give your response to Allah (by obeying Him) and to His Apostle. " (8.24) Then he added, "Shall I tell you the most superior Sura in the Qur'an before I go out of the mosque?" When the Prophet ﷺ

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[8] Sunan an-Nasa'i 912
[9] Holy Quran 15:87

intended to go out (of the Mosque), I reminded him and he said, "That is: "Al hamdu-li l-lahi Rabbil-`alamin (Surat-al-fatiha)' which is the seven oft repeated verses (Al-Mathani) and the Grand Qur'an which has been given to me."[10]

Surah Fatihah is also called Ar-Ruqyah (the divine cure), since in the Sahih, there is the narration of Abu Sa`id ﷺ Some of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) went on a journey till they reached some of the 'Arab tribes (at night). They asked the latter to treat them as their guests but they refused. The chief of that tribe was then bitten by a snake (or stung by a scorpion) and they tried their best to cure him but in vain. Some of them said (to the others), "Nothing has benefited him, will you go to the people who resided here at night, it may be that some of them might possess something (as treatment)," They went to the group of the companions (of the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, "Our chief has been bitten by a snake (or stung by a scorpion) and we have tried everything but he has not benefited. Have you got anything (useful)?" One of them replied, "Yes, by Allah! I can recite a Ruqya, but as you have refused to accept us as your guests, I will not recite the Ruqya for you unless you fix for us some wages for it." They agrees to pay them a flock of sheep. One of them then went and recited (Surat-ul-Fatiha): 'All the praises are for the Lord of the Worlds' and puffed over the chief who became all right as if he was released from a chain, and got up and started walking, showing no signs of sickness. They paid them what they agreed to pay. Some of them (i.e. the companions) then suggested to divide their earnings among

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[10] Sahih al-Bukhari 4703

themselves, but the one who performed the recitation said, "Do not divide them till we go to the Prophet (ﷺ) and narrate the whole story to him, and wait for his order." So, they went to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) & narrated the story. Allah's Messengerﷺ asked, "How did you come to know that Suratul- Fatiha was recited as Ruqya?" Then he added, "You have done the right thing. Divide (what you have earned) and assign a share for me as well." The Prophet (ﷺ) smiled thereupon[11].

Part - II

Ibn Qayim رحمة الله said Surah Fatihah contains a supplication for protection from misguidance and from the anger of Allah. This thus protects the heart from corrupt knowledge & evil intentions. The hidden cure to both these illnesses is also found in the verse (1:5).

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ٥

You alone we worship and You alone we ask for help.

Also recitation of Surah Fatihah is a means of conversation with Allah ﷻ. On the authority of Abu Hurayrah from the Prophet ﷺ, who said: A prayer performed by someone who has not recited the Essence of the Quran during it is deficient (and he repeated the word three times), incomplete. Someone said to Abu Hurayrah [Even though] we are behind the imam? He said: Recite it to yourself, for I have heard the Prophet ﷺ say :

[11] Sahih al-Bukhari 2276

Allah (mighty and sublime be He), had said: I have divided prayer between Myself and My servant into two halves, and My servant shall have what he has asked for. When the servant says:

ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ٢

Al-hamdu lillahi rabbi l-alamin Allah (mighty and sublime be He) says: My servant has praised Me. And when he says: Ar-rahmanir -rahim.

ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ ٣

Allah (mighty and sublime be He) says: My servant has extolled Me, and when he says:

مَٰلِكِ يَوْمِ ٱلدِّينِ ٤

Maliki yawmi d-din, Allah says: My servant has glorified Me - and on one occasion He said: My servant has submitted to My power. And when he says: Iyyaka na budu wa iyyaka nasta in.

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ٥

He says: This is between Me and My servant, and My servant shall have what he has asked for. And when he says: Ihdina s-sirata l-mustaqim, siratal ladhina an amta alayhim ghayril-maghdubi alayhim wa la d-dallin

ٱهْدِنَا ٱلصِّرَٰطَ ٱلْمُسْتَقِيمَ ٦

صِرَٰطَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ ٱلْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا ٱلضَّآلِّينَ ٧

He says: This is for My servant, and My servant shall have what he has asked for [12].

Along with Surah Fatihah called as Umm ul-Quran/Kitab (Mother of the Quran/Book) and Sab'ul-Mathani (The Seven Oft Repeated Verses). It also has secondary identities Al-Hamd, the Commend -ation, as it contains the Adoration of the Almighty Lord, As-Salah (The Prayer) It is named as the Entreaty because its reading is a requirement for the legality of the daily prayers. It is also called as Ash-Shifa (The Cure): Abu Sa'id ﷺ reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The Opening of the Book is a cure to every poison[13]. It is also called as Ar-Ruqyah (the Spiritual Cure) as mentioned in Hadith No [11]. That is why it is highly advised to recite Surah Fatiha and for the sick ones.
Ash-Sha'bi reports from Ibn Abbas ﷺ that he named it Asas al -Quran (the Basis of Quran): It is known by this name as Surah Fatiha contains the most essential fundamental teachings of Islam, i.e. Admiration of One Allah ﷻ

Sufyan bin Uyaynah named it Al-Waqiyah, the Protector.

Yahya ibn Abu Kathir named it Al-Kafiyah, the Sufficient, because it suffices from everything other than it but anything else does not suffice it, as occurs in the mursal hadith: As-Suyuti, رحمة الله referred it to Ad-Daruqutni and Al-Hakim. Narrated 'Ubadah ibn As-Samit ﷺ from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, 'The Mother of the Book suffices for other than it but nothing else suffices it [14].

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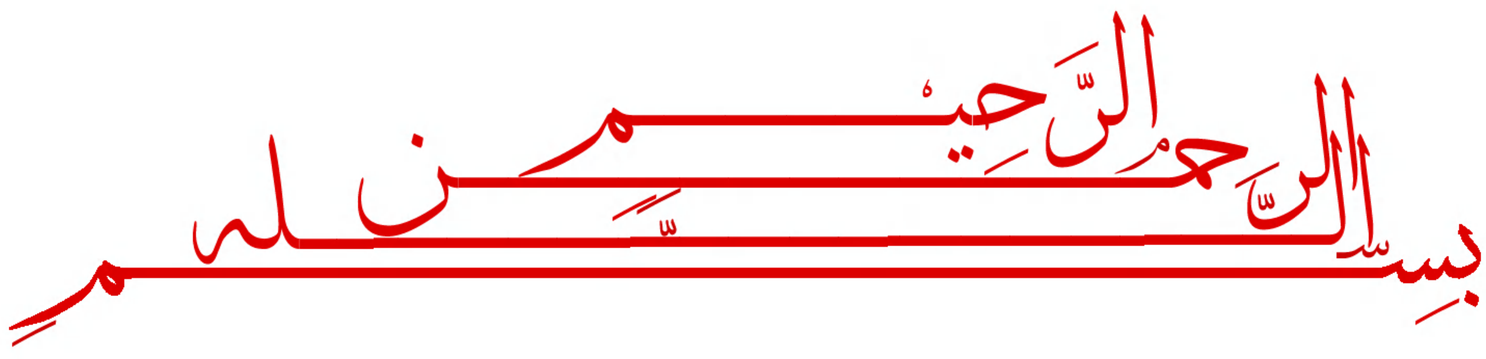
[12] Hadith Qudsi, Hadith No. 08
[13] Ad-Darimi
[14] Ad-Daruqutni (1/322)

Yahya related to me from Malik from al-Ala ibn Abd ar-Rahman ibn Yaqub that Abu Said, the mawla of Amir ibn Kuraz told him that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ called to Ubayy ibn Kab رضي الله عنه while he was praying. When Ubayy رضي الله عنه had finished his prayer he joined the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ put his hand upon his hand, and he was intending to leave by the door of the mosque, so the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "I hope that you will not leave the mosque until you know a sura whose like Allah has notsentdown in the Tawrah nor in the Injil nor in the Qur'an." Ubayy رضي الله عنه "I began to slow down my pace in the hope of that. Then I said, 'Messenger of Allah ﷺ the sura you promised me!' He said, 'What do you recite when you begin the prayer?' I recited the Fatiha (Sura 1) until I came to the end of it, and the Messengerof Allah ﷺ 'It is this sura, and it is the "seven oft -repeated" and the Great Qur'an which I was given.'[15]"

Concluding my work I would add Tafsir of Surah Fatihah by Sheikh Abdul-Rahman ibn Nasir al-Sa'di رحمة الله



In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

that is, I begin with every name of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta’sla - Glorified & Exalted is He); this includes all the (beautiful) names of Allah.

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[15] Muwatta Malik | Book 3, Hadith 186

Allah ﷻ - He is the One Who is worshipped, the only One Who deserves to be worshipped, because of the divine attributes He has, which are attributes of perfection.

the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful - These two names indicate that He possesses great mercy that encompasses all things and includes all living beings, and He has decreed it for the pious, the followers of His Prophets and Messengers عليهم السلام . Absolute mercy is for them; others have a share of it.

It should be noted that one of the basic principles on which the early generations of the Ummah and its leading scholars are agreed is belief in the names and attributes of Allah and how hose attributes are manifested. For example, they believe that He is Most Gracious, Most Merciful; He possesses mercy that is one of His attributes and this mercy has an impact on His creation. So all types of blessings are signs of His mercy. The same applies to all of His names. We may say concerning the All-Knowing that He has (unlimited) knowledge, by means of which He knows all things. Similarly, the All-Powerful is possessed of might and has power over all things.

Praise be to Allah - This refers to praising Allah for the attributes of perfection and for His actions that are based on generosity and justice. So to Him be perfect praise in all ways.

the Lord o f the worlds - The Lord is the One Who sustains all creatures which refers to all beings other than Allah because He

created them, granted them everything that they need and bestowed great blessings upon them; if they were deprived of those blessings they would not be able to survive, for whatever blessings they enjoy come from Him.

He sustains His creation in two ways, general and specific. In general terms, this refers to His creation of all creatures, His granting of provision to them and His guiding them to that which is in their best interests, which enables them to survive in this world.

In specific terms, it refers to His cherishing o f His close friends, by means of instilling faith in their hearts, guiding them to it, perfecting it for them and warding off from them distractions and obstacles that come between them and faith. In real terms, this means guiding them to everything that is good and protecting them from everything that is bad. Perhaps it is for this reason that most of the supplications of the Prophets used the word Lord (Rabb), since all their requests and needs came under His special cherishing.

The phrase **the Lord of the worlds** indicates that He alone has the power to create, and He alone controls His creation, bestows blessings and is completely independent of means, whilst all of creation is dependent upon Him in all respects.

Master of the Day of Judgement - The Master (Malik) is the one who possesses the attributes o f sovereignty, one of the implications of which is that He enjoins and forbids, rewards and

punishes, and controls His subjects in all ways. This sovereignty is connected to the Day of Judgement, which is the Day of Resurrection, the day on which people will be judged on the basis of their deeds, both good and bad. On that day, His perfect sovereignty, justice and wisdom will become completely clear to His creation, and they will realise that created beings have no sovereignty at all. On that day, kings and subjects, slaves and free, will all be equal and will submit fully to His might, awaiting the reckoning, hoping for His reward and fearing His punishment. Hence this day is singled out for mention; otherwise, He is the Master of the Day of Judgement and of all other days.

You [alone] we worship, and You [alone] we ask for help that is, we single out You alone to worship and ask for help. Putting the object at the beginning o f the sentence conveys the meaning of exclusivity. In other words: we worship You, and we do not worship anyone other than You; we ask You for help and we do not ask anyone other than You for help. Worship is mentioned before seeking help by way of mentioning what is general before what is specific, and also to give precedence to Allah's dues over those of His slaves.

Worship" ('ibadah) refers to everything that Allah loves and is pleased with of actions and words, both outward and inward. "Seeking help" refers to relying upon Allah ﷻ when seeking to attain what is beneficial and ward off what is harmful, whilst trusting that one will attain that.

attaining eternal happiness and salvation from all evils; there is no other way of attaining salvation apart from doing these two things. True worship can only be that which is learned from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ . and done with the intention of seeking the pleasure of Allah. If it includes these two things, then it is worship. Seeking help is mentioned after worship, even though it is a part of worship, because in offering all types of worship the individual needs the help of Allah ﷻ ; if Allah ﷻ does not help him, he will not attain what he wants to of fulfilling commands and heeding prohibitions.

Guide us to the straight path that is, show us and help us to follow the straight path, which is the clear path that leads to Allah and to His paradise, which in turn means knowing the truth and acting upon it. (This is a prayer) for guidance to the straight path and guidance when following the path. Guidance to the straight path means adhering to the religion of Islam and forsaking all other religions; guidance when following the path includes guidance concerning all the details of religion, in knowl -edge and action. This supplication is one of the most concise, comprehensive and beneficial of supplications. Hence it is obligatory to call upon Allah with it in every rak'ah of the prayer, because we are in need of that.

This straight path is **The path o f those whom You have blessed**, namely the Prophets, siddeeqeen (strong & true in faith), martyrs and righteous people.

not the path **of those who have incurred Your wrath** those

who came to know the truth but drifted away from it, such as the Jews and others like them; and not the path **of those who have gone astray** those who drifted away from the truth because of ignorance and misguidance, such as the Christians and others like them.

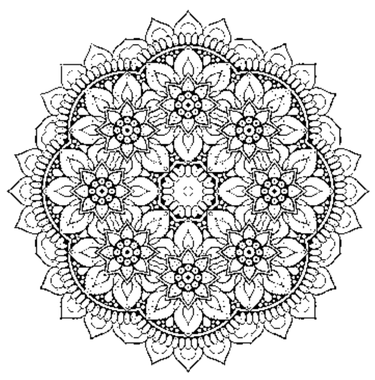
Although this soorah is brief, it contains that which no other soorah of the Qur'an contains. It refers to the three types of tawheed (affirmation of the oneness of Allah). Tawheed ar-ruboo biyah (affirmation of the oneness of the divine Lordship) is seen in the verse **the Lord of the worlds**. Tawheed al-uloohiyah (affirmation of the oneness of divinity), which refers to worship -ping Allah alone, is seen in the phrases **Praise be to Allah** and **You [alone] we worship**. Tawheed al-asma' was-sifat (affirmation of the oneness of the divine names and attributes), which means affirming that the attributes of perfection belong to Allah ﷻ alone, which He ascribed to Himself and which His Messenger ﷺ affirmed, without denying the apparent meanings or likening Him to His creation, is seen in the word **Praise**, as discussed above.

It affirms prophethood in the words **Guide us to the straight path**, because that guidance is not possible without sending Messengers. It affirms recompense for deeds in the words **Master of the Day of Judgement**, and tells us that the recompense will be on the basis of justice, because this is the meaning of the word judgement.

basis o f free will, which is contrary to the views o f the Qadaris *(Qadari: follower of a theological school of thought that denied the divine will and decree, and said that man has absolute free will, therefore whatever he does is purely his choice and his will is independent of the will of Allah.)* and Jabaris.(*Jabari: follower of a theological school o f thought that said that man has no free will, and whatever he does of good or evil is because it is decreed for him, and he is therefore compelled to do it and has no choice in the matter.*) In fact, it refutes all the followers of innovation[and misguidance] in the verse **Guide us to the straight path** because the straight path is knowing the truth and acting upon it, but everyone who follows innovation [and misguidance] does the opposite o f that. It speaks of being sincere towards Allah in terms of worship and seeking help, in the verse **You [alone] we worship, and You [alone] we ask for help**[16].

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

This is the end o f the commentary on Soorat al-Fatihah.
All praise and thanks are for Allah, and may the blessings and peace o f Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad ﷺ his family, and his Companions abundantly until the Day o f Judgement.



[16] Tafseer As-Sadi | Vol 1, Juz 1-3